

WATCHET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH REPORT 1958

Library



I will begin with the vital statistics for 1958:

There were 39 births and 37 deaths including 2 infant deaths below one year, and one of 2 years. Watchet death rate was 13.10 being 1st amongst Somerset Urban Districts.

The birth rate was 16.03 placing us 7th. A high infant mortality rate of 51.29. The death rate for England was 11.7 and the birth rate 16.4.

The average age at death was men. 61.9 and women 69.7, a very low rate indeed when compared with 1957, men 72 and women 74. There were two males over 80, 9 over 70, 1 over 60, and 5 over 50. One female over 90, 6 over 80, 3 over 70, 2 over 60 and 2 over 50.

The cause of death in 7 cases was coronary disease, 6 heart disease, 6 cancer, 3 vascular lesions 2 bronchitis. There were 2 deaths from tuberculosis, one pulmonary and one non pulmonary, the number on my register at the end of 1958 was 12, seven male and 5 female. Two cases were removed due to recovery and there were two new notifications, one male and one female.

When you realise there were 39 births in Watchet in 1958 and only 19 children were vaccinated it is obvious that the number is still not satisfactory. Diptheria and Whooping Cough was far better with 32 children under one year being immunised, 10 between 1 and 4, 3 between 5 and 14 and 17 had reinforcements. It is not possible to know how many were done with separate injections and how many had a combination.

There were 225 polio vaccinations under 15, one under 26 and 2 expectant mothers.

Notifications of infectious diseases showed we had a measles epidemic with 145 cases, and 2 of pulmonary T.B., with again no cases of polio.

The water supply during the year was bacteriologically clear.

Most ice cream samples sent to the Local Laboratories to be tested were good, but one or two were of a very poor standard.

The caravan sites continue to be exemplary, but as is usual a good deal of illness occurred in them during the year.

In September we had a visit from the Mass Radiography Service both at the Paper Mill and on the Esplanade for the General Public. At the Paper Mill 163 people (133 male. 30 female) were X Rayed when one active tuberculosis was picked up. He has been treated and I am happy to say he is back at work again. On the Esplanade 300 people made up of (119 male. 181 female) were X rayed, all were passed as clear. Whilst we are very glad of the opportunity of welcoming this service to Watchet I feel that a total of 300 members of the public is a very poor response from the citizens of Watchet. I would like to think that next time they pay us a visit we can increase this number considerably.

Home Help Service. Started during 1948, but during the past 10 years the pattern of help has changed considerably as bookings from home confinements have dropped by half. Now they are dealing more frequently with such of the mentally sick who are safe and happy at home. It is expected that this side which calls for much tact and understanding will increase still more in the next few years.

I feel I must also mention the great work that the British Red Cross and the St. Johns Ambulance Brigade do. In the past year they have assisted 3,457 patients and loaned garments totalling 7,159. Without this efficient service many patients would not be discharged home so early from hospital.

I note with great satisfaction that the sewerage scheme has at last been started. This I feel sure will assist in the further prevention of disease.

There are still many housing problems to be overcome; these are however being dealt with by the very long suffering housing committee.

My thanks are again due to the District Nurses for their invaluable help and to my Public Health Inspector. Also to the Members of the Council for the help they have rendered me during the year.

(sgd) R.J.R. LEWIS.

Medical Officer of Health
Watchet Urban District Council,

5th October, 1959.